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Bohrer Paper

~~DECLASSIFIED~~~~MEMORANDUM~~

July 13, 1961

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## OUTLINE

1. There is really no alternative to the course of action under consideration at the present time. Whatever our ultimate purpose should be in regard to Berlin, serious negotiation or complete confrontation without discussion, some strengthening of the United States military posture would appear to be essential. There are, however, varying degrees of timing and emphasis in the manner of carrying out this strengthening which could be considered in the light of alternatives. One possibility as to courses of action might be the following.

- A) To determine definitely upon the implementation of the recommendations in regard to military build-up, stemming from the Achsemen paper.
- B) Before taking any overt action such as proclamation of a limited national emergency, to have a personal, confidential consultation with De Gaulle and Macmillan and, in a second stage, with Adenauer, to establish a firm Western position, informing them of the President's intention to proceed with the measures outlined.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/C/P/D/MC (C) Once

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C) Once some definite command Western position was established, there would be two alternatives before us:

- (1) Putting the measures into effect (if agreed by the British and French and the West Germans) without any communication with the Soviet Union, or
- (2) Initiate some form of conversation, preferably through Ambassador Thompson with Khrushchev in an endeavor to ascertain more precisely exactly what the Soviets hope to achieve by their present attitude.

These are essentially the only alternatives that would seem to be feasible in the present situation. To endeavor to embark upon negotiations without the necessary preparatory measures as indicated in the Acheson paper, would amount to nothing more than a yielding to Soviet pressure and the result could not be satisfactory in any sense. On the other hand, to proceed full blast with all of the military preparations proposed in the current paper would run a very serious risk of committing us to a series of actions before the necessity for them is quite clear. Once a military move such as semi-mobilization is undertaken, it carries with it and creates an

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it goes along. One's own rationale and justification and can easily commit the country to take progressive steps without a full realization of what is going forward. There is no need to speak of the Soviet response to any such measures since I do not feel that such responses would be in themselves vital, but rather the effect upon public opinion in this country and in the allied world and world opinion at large. Since it is to be gathered from the Acheson report the main purpose of these movements is to increase the power of deterrents and indicate the willingness in certain conditions of the United States to proceed to nuclear war, the actual value of the increased military force would seem to be a secondary point. Therefore, there would not seem to be any great urgency as to timing beyond those measures which could be taken now without formal Congressional action or Presidential proclamation. It is my view that we should seek to utilize the period between now and the German elections to do the following:

- A) To take initial steps recommended in the paper, but stop short of any formal public act of mobilization.
- B) To mount a well thought-out publicity campaign through USIA to alert world opinion as to the realities of the Berlin situation; and

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C) [REDACTED] to utilize the period between now and the German elections for further exploration with the Soviets, the instructions for which would have to be drawn up with maximum attention as to how far in such exploratory talks we would be prepared to go.

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